

FIFTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE PHILADELPHIA

ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

JANUARY 10, 1850.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1850.

ANNUAL REPORT, &c.

—DIALOGUE—

THE managers of the PHILADELPHIA FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, in presenting their Fifth Annual Report, would record an expression of gratitude for the peaceful close of a year which has been made memorable to the abolitionists of this city, by disappointment, persecution, and peril. The shouts of a law-defying mob no longer resound through our streets, and our daily avocations and nocturnal repose are undisturbed by the malicious designs of those whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil to all who advocate the rights of the colored man, bond or free. We are aware that the influences which have allayed the storm that raged around us, are not attributable to our wisdom or energies, but to Him who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrains the remainder theretof; to Him who says to the tumultuous waves of human passion, as to the tempest-tossed sea, "Peace, be still!"

The year which we are reviewing, was commenced under happy auspices. Our successful efforts to procure signatures to anti-slavery memorials, our well filled treasury, and the general progress of the cause in 1837 excited bright hopes respecting the future. The anticipation of the completion of a temple, dedicated to free discussion, in which we might at last, find a resting place, and cease the

painful, fruitless labor of striving to open the doors of churches, session rooms, and commodious public halls to the advocates of human liberty, cheered and refreshed our souls. One of the first subjects which claimed the attention of the Board, related to the education of our own colored population, the duty of promoting which, we all acknowledge devolves upon us, and which our opponents accuse us of inconsistently neglecting. At the suggestion of the Board, the Society has, during the past year, taken under its care, a school for girls, which it sustains, chiefly at its own expense.* It is taught by Miss S. M. Douglass, and is in a flourishing condition, numbering thirty pupils. Of the plan of instruction pursued, and the progress made by the pupils, we invite our friends, and enemies too, to judge from personal inspection. Such inspection may afford encouragement to those who are striving to aid this class of our population in their efforts for self improvement, and rebuke for those, who, while they are placing countless difficulties in their path, and binding upon them heavy burdens, reproach them for the slowness of their progress. But this great work of attaining moral and intellectual elevation, in which we would gladly assist them, to the utmost extent of our power, depends so much upon their own energy and perseverance, that could we inspire each individual with a desire, and unconquerable determination to attain it, we should feel that its accomplishment was secured. The manner in which our funds have been appropriated will be shown by the treasurer's report. Two hundred copies of a pamphlet containing an address of

* As the pupils pay for their instruction, the school in part supports itself.

the Executive Committee of the State Society to the citizens of Pennsylvania, have been published by us, and we have been able to contribute a larger sum to the treasury of this Society than in any previous year. Our annual sale of useful and fancy articles has been attended with unexpected success, for which we are deeply indebted to the assistance of kind friends.

As the time for the anti-slavery convention of American women, drew near, we endeavored to prepare ourselves to perform our part in conducting this *novel measure* of reform, as national conventions of women must yet be considered. Our sisters from the north, and east, and west, gathered themselves together, in this city of brotherly love, "not knowing the things that should befall" them here. The tragical events of that memorable week have been published in various forms, and it is unnecessary to detail many of them here. They had not been anticipated by us. The storm of riot and outrage burst upon us as suddenly as a thunder-peal from the bright mid-summer heavens. The first four sessions of our convention were held in quietness, during the fifth, (held on the 17th of May) the shouts of an infuriate mob rose around us, mingling with our speakers' voices, and often overwhelming them. Yet little thought we, when we adjourned at the close of the day, that ours was the last assembly that would convene within those walls so lately upreared for the cause of freedom. The scenes of that night are well known. On the following day, being refused the use of a hall which in less perilous times, had occasionally been granted us, we held our closing session, of six hours, in a school room

which was offered us, by two of our members.* Kind friends, who were alarmed for our safety, sent us information that the mob had discovered our place of meeting, and would probably follow us, but we felt that we had no right to retreat. Having pledged ourselves to the cause of the slave, we were conscious that this was not a time for desertion; and when our President briefly stated the information alluded to, and calmly and solemnly requested those who feared to abide the issue, to retire, no one availed herself of the opportunity, and after a few moments' pause, during which, no doubt, many hearts were yet strengthened for the trial;” the business of the convention was resumed.

“ This was proud oppression’s hour;
Storms were round us, *could* we cower,
While, beneath the despot’s power,
Groaned the suffering slave!”

We were unmolested, and adjourned in quietness, bearing with us mental impressions that will never be obliterated; for during those few short hours, we had passed through an ordeal whose influences are such as mould the character for after years. Ah! little do the enemies of human freedom, and the persecutors of its friends, know of human nature, and less of the revivifying and immortal energy of truth. They know not how the unfettered spirit, conscious of the rectitude of its course, rises endowed with mightier energy by the blow which, for a moment prostrated it, and girds itself anew for warfare. If they did, they would surely despair of the accomplishment of their unhallowed

* We gladly avail ourselves of this opportunity to return our thanks to those individuals who so nobly risked their property on this occasion.

ends by the measures which they are accustomed to use. What, though the flames of a thousand temples, dedicated to liberty or religion, rise on the midnight air, and the dwelling of every lover of truth be levelled with the dust ; that truth will still exist, immutable, eternal ! The citadel of slavery shall be stormed, and taken, and destroyed, for the promise is certain, and the fulfilment sure. Not until he can scale the battlements of heaven, and cast down the throne of Jehovah, and Him that sitteth thereon, need we fear that man's mightiest efforts will prevent the accomplishment of one of the promises of God. In proportion to our faith in those promises, will be our hope of the slave's redemption from bondage.

Some of the immediate effects of this trial of our faith and patience, may be traced in the records of the next meeting of our Society. We returned, perhaps with saddened feelings, to the little room in which, for several years, we have been accustomed to meet, musing upon our blighted hopes. But this was a time for action. We were now to decide whether the voice of popular indignation, or the stern requirements of duty, should be obeyed. Deeming that the crisis demanded an expression of our feelings and purposes, respecting our future course, the following resolutions were proposed and adopted:

"Whereas, the events of the past month have been calculated to try the foundations of our faith, and to produce deep searchings of heart in those who have professed themselves the friends of the down-trodden and despised of our land : therefore,

Resolved, That in our again being assembled "with one accord in one place," for the purpose of carrying on the

work to which we are pledged, we feel assured that the good seed has not fallen on stony ground, to be withered by the scorching rays of persecution, but that out of honest and true hearts it will yet "bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

Resolved, That the state of public feeling, manifested by the burning of Pennsylvania Hall by a mob, countenanced by a large number of citizens, and unopposed by the civil authorities, because the principles of the "Declaration of Independence" were there advocated and maintained, call upon us for redoubled efforts to awaken the public mind to a sense of the ruin in which the enslavement of a part of our countrymen, threatens to involve the liberties of all.

Resolved, That in the denunciation and obloquy so liberally heaped upon us, we find new calls upon our fortitude to endure, our firmness to withstand, and our energy to subdue, the persecution, opposition, and violence with which we are assailed.

Resolved, That we endeavor to meet the increasing exigencies of the times by more confiding faith, more untiring perseverance, and by a spirit of greater self-denial, that we may be able to furnish the means necessary for carrying forward the great work of Human Freedom."

In accordance with the spirit of these resolutions, \$150 were immediately pledged to the recently formed Philadelphia County Anti-Slavery Society, and arrangements were made for circulating, throughout Pennsylvania, memorials to Congress, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the internal slave-trade. Encouraged by the partial success of similar efforts in

1837, we have adopted the same plan of labor which was then pursued. With the aid of some members of the Northern Liberties Anti-Slavery Society, we have endeavored to send them to every part of the city, and we believe that many thousands of signatures will be the result of these efforts. We are not discouraged in this work by the rude and contemptuous treatment which they receive in the halls of Congress. We are unmoved by the assertion that we are wasting time and strength in procuring signatures to memorials that will be unheeded there. We do not believe that they will be unheeded. Though a decree worthy a despotism of the dark ages, has condemned them to be unread, and undebated, not even the malignant craftiness of slaveholding statesmen have yet devised measures to prevent our legislators from *thinking of them*. Frequently, and intensely, do they think of them, and in spite of cunningly devised resolutions, frequently and earnestly do they speak of them, and however they who should be its careful protectors, may continue to trample on the right of petition, we shall continue to send up our memorials to them, year after year, until, by our importunity, they are induced to grant our request, or deliverance for the captive shall arise from another place.

We trust that the events of the past year will incite us to commence another with more fervent zeal and unwearied diligence than has marked the last. During its course, thousands of our fellow beings have commenced a life in slavery : let us hasten to bestow on them the boon of freedom, ere they can comprehend the wretchedness of their existence. A voice admonishing us to work while

the day lasts, comes up to us from the grave of one of our number, whose life was a sacrifice to her zealous and protracted labors for the slave, "in season and out of season." May her example urge us onward in our work, and her influence still be felt among us! It is true that our beautiful house, which we hoped would long stand a monument to freedom, is burned with fire, and some of our bright hopes and pleasant anticipations are laid waste; yet we are not dismayed or confounded by these things. Standing by the side of our ruined temple, have we not renewed our pledges of fidelity to the injured and outraged slave, and as we gazed on that work of slavery's minions, which whispered to us of the fearful tyranny under which he daily groans, have we not resolved, *for his sake*, to be

"Firm and unwavering unto bonds or death?"

It has been accounted a privilege to live in "times that try men's souls," and if it be "more blessed to give than to receive," it is surely far greater joy to be instrumental in working out, through "evil report and good report," the redemption of two and a half millions of slaves, than even to witness their rapture on the day of their jubilee. The delightful consciousness that we are aiding in a work so great and glorious, though we may not see on earth its consummation, shall be to us, for all our days of toil and nights of weariness, for all the obloquy, reproach and persecution that we may bear, a sufficient "recompence of reward."

TREASURER'S REPORT.

The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, in Account with M. Forten, Treasurer.

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To cash paid to Penn. State A. S. Society,	\$400	By balance in the treasury,	\$382.99
for twenty copies of the Liberator,	50	subscriptions received at annual meeting,	30.75
for printing Annual Report and		subscriptions received subsequently,	50
Circulars,	22.55	cash collected by committee for the school,	240.05
for rent of room for meetings,	14.12	cash collected per Mrs. Mott,	11
for publications for the use of the Society,	27.38	donations and subscriptions,	95.17
for rent of room and fuel for school,	59.74	income from the school,	86.25
for 6 months salary to school teacher,	150	monthly contributions,	7.20
for cleaning and furnishing school room,	50.75	cent a week subscriptions,	.5
to A. S. Convention of Am. Women,	25	contribution box,	1.95
for printing Address of Ex. Com. of Penn. A. S. Society,	10	proceeds of anti-slavery sale,	403.10
for five copies of Penn. Freeman,	10		
for postage, account book, etc.,	6.45		
for one copy of Philanthropist,	2.50		
to Philadelphia Co. A. S. Society,	4		
to S. A. Lewis for balance of her bill,	2.60		
to balance in the Treasury,	445.80		
	1280.70		
			1280.70

SUSAN HATDOCK, *§* Auditor,
S. M. DOUGLAS, *§*

CONSTITUTION
OF THE PHILADELPHIA
FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

WHEREAS, more than two millions of our fellow countrymen, of these United States, are held in abject bondage; and whereas, we believe that slavery and prejudice against color are contrary to the laws of God, and to the principles of our far-famed Declaration of Independence, and recognising the right of the slave to immediate emancipation; we deem it our duty to manifest our abhorrence of the flagrant injustice and deep sin of slavery, by united and vigorous exertions for its speedy removal, and for the restoration of the people of color to their inalienable rights. For these purposes, we, the undersigned, agree to associate ourselves under the name of "THE PHILADELPHIA FEMALE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY."

ARTICLE I.

The object of this Society shall be to collect and disseminate correct information of the character of slavery, and of the actual condition of the slaves and free people of color, for the purpose of inducing the community to adopt such measures, as may be in their power, to dispel the prejudice against the people of color, to improve their

condition, and to bring about the speedy abolition of slavery.

ARTICLE II.

Any female uniting in these views, and contributing to the funds, shall be a member of the Society.

ARTICLE III.

The officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice President, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and Librarian, who, with six other members, shall constitute a Board of Managers, to whom shall be intrusted the business of the Society, and the management of its funds. They shall keep a record of their proceedings, which shall be laid before the Society, at each stated meeting. They shall have power to fill any vacancy that may occur in their number, till the next annual meeting.

ARTICLE IV.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, and shall have power to call special meetings of the Society and of the Board.

ARTICLE V.

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in her absence.

ARTICLE VI.

The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of the transactions of the Society, and notify all meetings of the Society.

ARTICLE VII.

The Corresponding Secretary shall keep all communications addressed to the Society, and manage all the correspondence with any other bodies or individuals, according to the directions of the Society or of the Managers.

ARTICLE VIII.

The Treasurer shall collect the subscriptions and grants to the Society, make payments according to its directions, and those of its Managers, and present an audited report at each annual meeting.

ARTICLE IX.

The Librarian shall take charge of all books and pamphlets belonging to the Society, and conform to the rules prescribed by the Society, for the management of the library.

ARTICLE X.

The Managers shall meet once a month, or oftener if necessary, on a day fixed by themselves, and stated meetings of the Society shall be held on the second Fifth-day in every month.

ARTICLE XI.

The annual meeting shall be held on the second Fifth-day, (Thursday,) of the First month, (January,) at which time the reports of the Board and Treasurer shall be presented, and the officers for the ensuing year elected.

ABSTINENCE BILL.

It is especially recommended that the members of this Society should entirely abstain from purchasing the products of slave labor, that we may be able consistently to plead the cause of our brethren in bonds.

ABSTINENCE BILL.

This Constitution may be altered at any stated meeting by the vote of two-thirds of the members present, notice having been given at a previous meeting.